

Statement of

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**9/11 Health Effects: Federal Monitoring and Treatment of Residents and
Responders**

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Following the September 11, 2001 attacks, over 34,000 NYPD officers and employees -the largest single group of responders in NYC - participated in rescue, recovery and cleanup operations at Ground Zero, or one of the other designated exposure sites. Since that time the NYPD's Medical Division has documented, evaluated, monitored, tracked and referred for treatment, all of its members who have come forward with WTC-related symptoms. In addition, the Medical Division initiated a follow-up study of exposed individuals in 2002 and, has another scheduled for later this year.

The NYPD Medical Division is now completing two five-year studies of WTC-related conditions - one involving its Emergency Services Units, and a second, following other members of the department with new-onset, or persistent symptoms. In addition, in an effort to expand the network of options available to its employees early on, the NYPD established liaison programs with Columbia University (Project Cope), for psychological evaluations and treatment, and the Mt. Sinai Medical Center, for the evaluation and treatment of respiratory conditions, as well as encouraging enrollment in the World Trade Center Health Registry and Project Liberty and the NYPD's peer support groups.

The initiatives undertaken by the NYPD to date have been entirely self-sustained, without benefit of any Federal funding, while projected costs for continued monitoring and treatment have been estimated to be approximately \$15M annually. Even at this early stage over 2500 medical claims have been submitted for WTC-related illness or injury by NYPD personnel, encompassing respiratory, orthopedic, psychological, gastro-intestinal, hearing and other symptoms, 104 NYPD members have retired with disabilities due to

these conditions, and over 300 disability applications potentially stemming from WTC-related causes, currently await finalization.

The importance of obtaining funding for continuation of these efforts cannot be over-emphasized. The 34,000 exposed members of the NYPD represent a most important, and unequalled source of medical information, waiting to be examined. The ability of the NYPD Medical Division to monitor and track the health status of its members, observe emerging symptoms and disease trends, and relate them to time and place of exposure, are unique. Data and disease trends and syndromic surveillance emerging from this large group, which represents a true cross-section of the City's adult population- will be of great importance to the scientific and medical community, and will be vital for epidemiologically assessing medical and psychological issues, for years to come. It will also help those in government responsible for preparedness, to better plan and execute large-scale programs, in the event of another urban catastrophe.

The NYPD, along with its sister agencies, was present in force from the first moments of this great national tragedy, lost some of its finest on that dark day, and continues to deal with the medical and psychological consequences since. In order to do so adequately, and for the sake of the wider public good, the NYPD cannot hope to do it alone. It will require--and deserves-- national assistance.